

CONSOLIDATION OF OFFICE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS
UNDER CHIEF OF ENGINEERS, UNITED STATES ARMY, AND
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF STATE, WAR, AND NAVY DE-
PARTMENT BUILDINGS

FEBRUARY 2, 1925.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House on the
state of the Union and ordered to be printed

Mr. ELLIOTT, from the Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H. R. 11029]

The Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds, to which was referred the bill (H. R. 11029) to consolidate the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds under the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, and the office of Superintendent of the State, War, and Navy Department Buildings, having duly considered the same, hereby make report of it to the House with amendments and with the recommendation that the bill as amended do pass.

Page 1, line 6, after the word "consolidated," insert "into a single office."

Page 2, line 3, after the word "Capital," strike out the period and insert in lieu thereof a comma and add the following: "and shall be assigned by the President from the officers of the Corps of Engineers for duty in this position as now provided by law for the officer in charge of public buildings and grounds and the Superintendent of the State, War, and Navy Department Buildings."

Page 2, line 10, after the word "director," strike out "subject to the approval of" and insert in lieu thereof "under the general direction of."

Page 2, between lines 11 and 12, insert the following:

SEC. 3. The Office of Public Buildings and Grounds, under the direction and control of the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army, is hereby abolished, and all authority, powers, and duties conferred and imposed by law upon the Secretary of War or upon the Chief of Engineers of the United States Army in relation to the construction, maintenance, care, custody, policing, upkeep, or repair of public buildings, grounds, parks, monuments, or memorials in the District of Columbia, together with the authority, powers, and all duties and powers conferred and imposed by law upon the officer in charge of public buildings

and grounds, shall be held, exercised, and performed by the director of public buildings and public parks of the National Capital, under the general direction of the President of the United States.

Page 2, line 12, change the number of the section from 3 to 4.

Page 2, line 25, after the work "Army," strike out "below" and insert in lieu thereof "not above."

Page 3, line 1, change the number of the section from 4 to 5.

Page 3, line 7, change the number of the section from 5 to 6.

Page 3, at the end of section 5, strike out the period and insert in lieu thereof a comma and add the following: "except as provided in section 3 of this act."

The language of this bill is very similar to a provision of the pending reorganization bill. It might be well to include in this report the following extract from the report of the joint committee on reorganization on that bill:

OFFICE OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS AND PARKS IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

The creation of the office of public buildings and parks in the District of Columbia, as proposed by the committee, is a step recommended for the purpose of consolidating two offices, nominally separate at the present time, but actually administered by the same officer. These are the office of the Superintendent of the State, War, and Navy Department Building and the office of Public Buildings and Grounds. The former is under the supervision of a commission composed of the heads of the State, War, and Navy Departments, while the latter is subject to the control of the Secretary of War.

The office of Superintendent of the State, War, and Navy Department Building was established in 1883, when the State, War, and Navy Department Building was erected, for the purpose of maintaining that building. During and after the war it assumed the management of the new structures erected to house the enlarged offices of the three departments. More recently it has been given jurisdiction of the buildings occupied by other departments, and at the present time it maintains the larger part of the office buildings used by the executive branch of the Government. The notable exceptions are the buildings occupied by the Veterans' Bureau, the Department of the Treasury, and the Department of Agriculture. The functions of the office are to keep the buildings in good repair, to maintain and operate the heating and lighting plants, to attend to the cleaning, to operate the elevators, and so on. The watchmen and guards are under its supervision, and it has entire responsibility for the safety as well as the maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and premises under its control.

The office of Public Buildings and Grounds, under the War Department, is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of public buildings, grounds, parks, and memorials in the District of Columbia, exclusive of those occupied by the executive departments. These include such buildings as the Executive Mansion, the Washington Monument, and the Lincoln Memorial, and the entire park system, including Rock Creek and Potomac Parks.

The close relationship of the work of the two offices is obvious, and the advantages of joining them in administration so evident that it has long been the custom to assign the officer in charge of public buildings and grounds to serve also as Superintendent of the State, War, and Navy Department Building. The supervision exercised over this officer in his dual capacity is purely nominal. By custom he has been the military aid to the President, and effectually subject to the President's direct control.

The proposal to consolidate the two offices as an independent establishment directly under the President follows the theory that an organization maintained for the benefit of all Government offices generally should be independent of any executive department. The office of public buildings and parks in the District of Columbia would as a matter of fact correspond almost exactly to the arrangement which now prevails, but would unify two establishments which are now nominally separate and bring about a single cohesive organization to accomplish the purposes for which the two agencies are now maintained.

This bill has the approval of the Secretary of War, as is evidenced by his report thereon, which is as follows:

WAR DEPARTMENT,
Washington, January 22, 1925.

Hon. R. N. ELLIOTT,
*Acting Chairman Committee on Public Buildings and Grounds,
House of Representatives.*

MY DEAR MR. ELLIOTT: Reference is made to your letter of December 31, 1924, requesting the recommendations of this department with regard to the bill H. R. 11029, to consolidate the Office of Public Buildings and Grounds under the Chief of Engineers, United States Army, and the office of Superintendent of the State, War and Navy Department Buildings.

These two offices have for a number of years been operating under one head and I can see no objection to the consolidation of the two organizations into one. There have been indicated on the copy of the bill herewith certain amendments suggested with a view to clarifying the intent of the bill and more definitely fixing the responsibilities and duties of the new office.

As thus amended I know of no objection to the favorable consideration of the bill.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN W. WEEKS, *Secretary of War.*

A hearing was held on this measure which developed the fact that the consolidation of these two offices will result in an annual saving of from \$25,000 to \$50,000.

Your committee considers this a very meritorious measure and urges its speedy enactment into law.

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